

Week of July 29, 2002: MaineDOT Flash Facts

Topic: Teen Driving

Monday:

Facts/Openers:

One out of four 16 and 17 year old drivers will be involved in a crash this year, four times greater than the average.

The most common cause for teenage crashes is Driver Inattention or Distraction. (Occurs 30% more often than it does for adults.)

Young drivers are involved 35% more frequently in Run Off the Road crashes than adults. (Often caused by a mix of excessive speed, driver inattention and inexperience)

Tips:

- Driving demands your full attention.
- Keep scanning the road ahead and to the side for changes in road, traffic and other conditions.
- Be prepared to take evasive actions with split second timing.
- Adjust driving speed to conditions, but never above the posted speed limit.
- Changing the CD, using a cell phone or checking out what is going on at the side of the road may only take 2 seconds, but at 50 miles per hour, a car travels 150 feet in that time.

Wednesday:

Facts/Openers:

- For 16 to 20 year old drivers, inexperience leads to crashes 10 times more often than it does for older drivers. (17% for 16-20 year olds, 1.7% for those 21 and older).
- Forty percent of teenage crash fatalities are the result of unsafe speed.

Tips:

- Admit your limitations
- Keep safety in mind (Do not take chances)
- Keep your vehicle under control
 - Maintain a safe speed
 - Slow down prior to curves and turns
 - Watch what other vehicles are doing (and be prepared to react to unexpected actions.)

Here are some key traffic safety situations:

- Following another vehicle (Maintain at least a 3 second gap between you and the vehicle ahead -longer in poor weather or when visibility ahead is blocked.)
- Making a left turn (Keep your wheels straight until you go into your turn)
 - (Make sure oncoming traffic in all lanes is clear)
 - (Watch for pedestrians and bicyclists)
- Crossing an intersection (Look left, then right, then left again before proceeding)
- Driveways (Make sure you signal your intentions before turning into a driveway)
 - (Stop and check traffic carefully before exiting a driveway)

Friday

Facts:

- 16-thousand 16 and 17 year olds have Maine driver's licenses.
- Young drivers are 4 times more likely be involved in a fatal crash than drivers over 30.
- 16 to 19 year olds involved in crashes are 50% more likely to be tired or fatigued than those over 30.

Tips:

- Never drive when tired.
 - Candy bars, coffee, music and open windows do not help.
 - Take breaks every two hours.
-

Fact:

In 2000, two thirds of the 16-18 year olds killed or severely injured were not wearing seat belts.

Tip:

- Always wear your seatbelt
- Make sure everyone else in your car buckles up, too. (It's the law!)